United States District Court Southern District of New York

EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS FOUNDATION and ESE NYC, INC. d/b/a EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, 08 cv

2235

Plaintiffs

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

- against -

TEKNOLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and MEHMET EMIN HITAY,

Defendants.

JUDGES OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Defendants above-named, TEKNOLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and MEHMET EMIN HITAY (respectively "TEKNOLOJI" and "HITAY" and collectively "defendants"), respectfully submit the following in support of their removal of this action to this court:

1. Defendant TEKNOLOJI is a corporation incorporated in the Republic of Turkey, with its principal place of business in Istanbul, Turkey. TEKNOLOJI is a citizen of Turkey, and maintains no residence or place of business in the United States.

- 2. Defendant HITAY is a citizen of the Republic of Turkey and a resident of Istanbul, Turkey, and the principal executive officer of defendant TEKNOLOJI. HITAY maintains no citizenship, residence or place of business in the United States.
- 3. Plaintiff EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS FOUNDATION is, according to publicly available electronic records from the New York State Department of State, Division of Corporations, a corporate entity organized under New York State law.¹
- 4. Plaintiff ESE NYC, INC. d/b/a EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS is, according to publicly available electronic records from the New York State Department of State, Division of Corporations, a corporate entity organized under New York State law.²
- 5. It is unclear whether the coupling d/b/a entity identified after the second-named plaintiff, ESE NYC, INC., is a separate entity or simply an incorporating reference to the first-named plaintiff, because the end-word "FOUNDATION" is missing from the name of the identified d/b/a entity.

¹ <u>See</u> www.dos.state.ny.us/corp/buscorp.html#dchange (corporation organized July 14, 2005) (last visited March 5, 2008).

² <u>See</u> www.dos.state.ny.us/corp/buscorp.html#dchange (corporation organized February 4, 2003) (last visited March 5, 2008).

- 6. In February 2008 defendants received notice, *via* mail, of a summons and verified complaint issued out of the Supreme Court of the State of New York, County of New York, under Index No: 101003/08. A true copy of that summons and verified complaint is attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- 7. The verified complaint alleges that plaintiffs are, respectively, a New York State non-profit foundation and a New York State corporation "authorized to transact business in New York," and that plaintiff ESE NYC, INC.'s principal place of business is New York (see complaint ¶¶1, 3-4).3
- 8. The verified complaint further alleges that defendants are Turkish-based nationals (see complaint ¶¶5-6).
- 9. The verified complaint, narrating that plaintiffs "have no adequate remedy at law," seeks a declaratory judgment that a November 21, 2007 purported written Licensing Agreement between plaintiffs and defendants "is in full force and effect and is a binding contract," and a judicial determination that plaintiffs "are entitled to keep the 500,000 Euro which Defendants paid in consideration for the benefits received under the Licensing Agreement" (quoting complaint, prayer for relief ¶¶1-2; see also complaint ¶¶ 12-13). The complaint did not annex the purported Licensing Agreement.

³ The complaint does not identify the principal place of business of the first-named plaintiff, EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS FOUNDATION.

- 10. There have been no other proceedings in this state court action.
- 11. The court has diversity jurisdiction over this action, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a)(2), in that plaintiffs are citizens of New York State with their principal places of business in New York State and defendants are citizens of the Republic of Turkey with their principal place of business in Istanbul, Turkey.
- 12. Further, and relatedly, the amount here in controversy well exceeds \$75,000.00. See ¶9 above (quoting complaint's allegation that plaintiffs received 500,000 Euros from defendants).4
- principal of defendant TEKNOLOJI, and makes no specific claim of wrongdoing against HITAY. HITAY would thus be a sham defendant for any otherwise appropriate analysis of the diversity of each plaintiff and defendant.
- 14. In accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1441, venue in this district is proper (see complaint ¶¶1-2).

⁴ <u>See</u>, <u>e.g</u>., http://finance.yahoo.com/currency/convert?amt=1&from=EUR&to=USD&submit=Convert. Noting March 5, 2008 Euro conversion rate of 1.5264; hence, 500,000 Euros to dollars yield \$763,224 (last visited March 5, 2008).

15. This notice of removal is timely, having been filed within 30 days from the date defendants received the summons with verified complaint *via* mail in Turkey.

WHEREFORE, defendants respectfully aver that this action has been properly removed to this court.

Dated: New York, New York March 5, 2008

Respectfully submitted,

Nusret A. Haker, Esq.

(NH 4696)

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July 1

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New York, New York 10006

(646) 723-9504 garethws@att.net

Counsel to defendants

Attorney for defendants

TO:

James M. Strauss, Esq.
PUTNEY TWOMBLY HALL & HIRSON LLP
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10175
(212) 682-0020

Attorneys for plaintiffs

EXHIBIT A

C 199—Summons without Notice, Supreme Court. Personal or Substituted Service. 8-88

reme Court of the State of New Hore

miy of New York

COPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS FOUNDATION and NYC, INC. d/b/a EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF

Plaintiff

against

CLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and MEHMET EMIN

Defendant

above named Defendant

Teknoloji Holdings AS

Index No. 101003/08

Plaintiff designates

NEW YORK County as the place of trial

The basis of the venue is

Plaintiff's primary place

Dummuns of business

Plaintiff resides at

350 Fifth Ave, Suite 3309 New York, NY 10118

County of New York

of your answer, or, if the complaint is not served with this summons, to serve a notice of nce, on the Plaintiff's Attorney(s) within 20 days after the service of this summons, exclusive lay of service (or within 30 days after the service is complete if this summons is not personally it to you within the State of New York); and in case of your failure to appear or answer, judgill be taken against you by default for the relief demanded in the complaint.

t's address:

Teknoloji Plaza Eski Buyukdere Cad. Ozcan Sok, No. 2 344416 4 Levent-Istanbul, Turkey

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James Strauss

Attorney(s) for Plaintiff

Post Office Address

Putney, Twombly Hall & Hirson LL 521 Fifth Ave New York, NY 10175 (212)-682-0020

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SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK COUNTY OF NEW YORK

EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS FOUNDATION and ESE NYC, INC. d/b/a EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,

Index No. 101003/08

VERIFIED COMPLAINT FOR

DECLARATORY JUDGMENT

Plaintiffs.

- against -

TEKNOLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and MEHMET EMIN HITAY,

Defendants.

Plaintiffs European School of Economics Foundation ("ESEF") and ESE NYC, Inc. d/b/a European School of Economics ("ESE"), by their attorneys, Putney, Twombly, Hall & Hirson LLP, as and for their Verified Complaint for Declaratory Judgment against Defendants Teknoloji Holdings A.S. ("Teknoloji Holdings") and Mehmet Emin Hitay ("Hitay"), allege upon information and belief, as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 1. The claims asserted herein arise under the common law of the State of New York. This Court has jurisdiction over this action since ESE maintains a principal place of business in New York State and the contract at issue in this lawsuit was formed, agreed to and/or created in New York County, New York.
- 2. Venue is properly laid in the County of New York since ESE maintains offices in New York County and the contract at issue in this lawsuit was formed, agreed to and/or created in New York County, New York.

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THE PARTIES

- 3. At all times relevant hereto, Plaintiff European School of Economics Foundation was and is a New York State not-for-profit foundation authorized to transact business in the State of New York.
- At all times relevant hereto, Plaintiff ESE NYC, Inc. d/b/a European School 4. of Economics was and is a New York State educational corporation and is authorized to transact business in the State of New York.
- Upon information and belief, Defendant Teknoloji Holdings A.S. is a foreign 5. holding company with a principal place of business located at Teknoloji Plaza, Eski Buyukdere Cad. Ozcan Sok. No. 2 344416, 4.Levent-Istanbul, Turkey.
- Upon information and belief, Defendant Mehmet Emin Hitay is an officer, 6. director, owner and/or principal of Defendant Teknoloji Holdings A.S. and a resident of the Republic of Turkey, with a principal place of business located at Teknoloji Plaza, Eski Buyukdere Cad. Ozcan Sok. No. 2 344416, 4.Levent-Istanbul, Turkey.

SUBSTANTIVE ALLEGATIONS

- 7. ESE is a private college of higher education which offers undergraduate and post-graduate programs to its students. ESE has centers in London, England; New York, New York; and Rome, Milan and Lucca, Italy.
- 8. In or around November 2007, representatives of Plaintiffs met with Defendant Hitay for purposes of opening up an ESE campus in the Republic of Turkey.

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9. Among other things, Plaintiffs and Defendants agreed that in exchange for, among other things, 500,000 Euro, Defendant Teknoloji Holdings would receive, among other things, a license for the use of the registered ESEF and ESE name and logo and all concomitant rights associated therewith for purposes developing a teaching facility similar to ESE's New York, New York center.

- 10. Further according to the parties' agreement, the territory where the license would be valid was limited to the Republic of Turkey.
- Further according to the parties' agreement, the Agreement is to be governed 11. by New York law.
- 12. After negotiations between the parties, Plaintiffs and Defendants entered into a written Licensing Agreement contract dated November 21, 2007.
- Paragraph 6 of the Licensing Agreement entered into between the parties 13. provides that upon signing the Licensing Agreement, Defendant Teknoloji Holdings became obligated to pay Plaintiffs 500,000 Euro in exchange for the rights to the ESE and ESEF name and logo. As stated in paragraph 6 of the Licensing Agreement:
 - TH [i.e., Defendant Teknoloji Holdings] shall pay upon receipt of this 6. agreement, a fee in the amount of euro 500,000.00 in consideration for the use of:
 - The ESEF name and logo in the Turkish territory
 - The ESE name and logo in the Turkish territory

The above-mentioned fee may be paid by international USD draft or by wire transfer to the following bank account:

ESE NYC INC. HSBC Bank USA

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. . i.

Account # 012808377 ABA # 021001088 SWIFT CODE # MRMDUS33

- 14. The binding nature of the Licensing Agreement is evidenced by the fact that on November 26, 2007, Defendants wired 500,000 Euro to Plaintiffs in accordance with the wiring instructions listed in paragraph 6 of the Licensing Agreement.
- 15. The 500,000 Euro wired to Plaintiffs was received by Plaintiffs on November 28, 2007.
- 16. Subsequent to the Licensing Agreement becoming a binding contractual obligation between the parties, Defendant Hitay attempted to re-negotiate certain of the Licensing Agreement's terms.
- 17. In January 2008, due to Plaintiffs' refusal to re-negotiate the Licensing Agreement's terms to Defendant Hitay's satisfaction, Defendant Hitay made a demand on Plaintiffs for a return of the 500,000 Euro which Defendant paid in consideration for the benefits received under the Licensing Agreement.
- Among other things, as grounds for his demand for the return of the 500,000 18. Euro, Defendant Hitay has contended to Plaintiffs that no contract exists between the parties.
- 19. Pursuant to the binding contractual obligation between the parties, Plaintiffs are entitled to keep the 500,000 Euro which Defendants paid in consideration for the benefits received under the Licensing Agreement.

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AS AND FOR A FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION (Declaratory Judgment)

- Plaintiffs repeat, reiterate and reallege each and every allegation of paragraphs 20. 1 through 19 of the Complaint, inclusive, as if fully set forth at length herein.
- In November 2007 Plaintiffs and Defendants entered into a binding contract 21. with one another as memorialized in the Licensing Agreement.
- 22. The binding nature of the Licensing Agreement is evidenced by Defendants' compliance with the obligation detailed in paragraph 6 of the Licensing Agreement to, upon acceptance of the Licensing Agreement's terms, wire transfer 500,000 Euro to Plaintiffs.
- 23. Receipt by Plaintiffs of Defendants' 500,000 Euro payment pursuant to the terms of the Licensing Agreement is acknowledged.
- Defendant Hitay improperly has attempted to repudiate the parties' contract by 24. demanding a return of the consideration he paid in exchange for the consideration Defendants received under the Licensing Agreement's terms.
- 25. By virtue of Defendant Hitay's attempt to unilaterally void his binding obligation to Plaintiffs and his demand for a return of the consideration Defendants paid under the Licensing Agreement's terms, Plaintiffs are entitled to a declaration that a binding contract exists between the parties which is entitled to full force and effect and that Plaintiffs are entitled to keep the 500,000 Euro which Defendants paid in consideration for the benefits received under the Licensing Agreement..
 - 26. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law. WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs demand judgment against Defendants that the Court:

- Determine and declare that the Licensing Agreement is in full force and effect 1. and is a binding contract between Plaintiffs and Defendant Teknoloji Holdings;
- Determine and declare that pursuant to the binding contractual obligation 2. between the parties, Plaintiffs are entitled to keep the 500,000 Euro which Defendants paid in consideration for the benefits received under the Licensing Agreement; and
- 3. Grant such other and further relief as it may deem just, proper, and equitable, including interest, cost and attorneys' fees.

Dated: New York, New York January 22, 2008

PUTNEY TWOMBLY HALL & HIRSON LLP

James M. Strauss

521 Fifth Avenue

New York, New York 10175 Telephone: 212-682-0020

Telefax: 212-682-9380

Attorneys for Plaintiff's European School of Economics Foundation and ESE NYC, Inc. d/b/a European School of **Economics**

VERIFICATION

The undersigned affirms under penalty of perjury that I am the Secretary and Treasurer both of Plaintiff ESE NYC, Inc. d/b/a European School of Economics and Plaintiff European School of Economics Foundation and that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint and know the contents thereof and the same is true to the knowledge of your affirmant except as to the matters therein alleged upon information and belief and that as to those matters I believe them to be true.

Dated: New York, New York January 22, 2008

Alessandro Nomellini

Document 1

Filed 03/06/2008

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2235

JS 44C/SDNY REV. 12/2005 CIVIL COVER THEE

The JS-44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet.

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ATTORNEYS (FIRM NA	ME, ADDRESS, AND TEL	EPHONE NUMBER	ATTORNEYS (IF KNOWN)							
	ill & Hirson LLP (Te ew York, New York 1		Gareth W. Stewart (Tel: 646 723-9504) 29 Broadway, 9th Floor, New York, New York 10006							
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT (NEW YORK SOUTHERN)

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS
FOUNDATION and ESE NYC, INC. d/b/a
EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,

-V
TEKNOLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and
MEHMET EMIN HITAY,

CV 2235
Case No.

Rule 7.1 Statement

Defendant.

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 7.1 [formers Local General Rule 1.9] and to enable District Judges and Magistrate Judges of the Court to evaluate possible disqualification or recusal, the undersigned counsel for

TEKNOLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and MEHMET EMIN HITAY (a private non-governmental party)

certifies that the following are corporate parents, affiliates and/or subsidiaries of said party, which are publicly held.

NONE

Date:

March 5, 2008

Signature of Attorney

Attorney Bar Code: GS: 2371

United States District Court	
Southern District of New York	08 Civ.
EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS FOUNDATION and ESE NYC, INC. d/b/a EUROPEAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,	
Plaintiffs,	
- against -	
TEKNOLOJI HOLDINGS A.S. and MEHMET EMIN HITAY,	
Defendants.	
NOTICE OF REMOVAL	

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Attorney for defendants